

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 03804

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TAGS: CUL, PINT, SP, CU
SUBJECT: SPANISH PARTICIPATION IN HAVANA WORLD YOUTH
FESTIVAL

REF: STATE 84164

1. THE EMBASSY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE FEBRUARY MADRID VISIT OF USYC LEADERS LARRY SPECHT AND JESSICA SMITH TO INCLUDE IN THE DISCUSSIONS WITH CULTURE MINISTRY YOUTH AFFAIRS OFFICIALS AND YOUTH LEADERS THEMSELVES THE ISSUE OF THE HAVANA FESTIVAL. ALTHOUGH THE PURPOSE OF THESE CONTACTS WAS TO ESTABLISH THE FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE USYC EXCHANGES WITH THE TWO MAJOR SPANISH POLITICAL YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS -- THE GOVERNING PARTY'S "JUVENTUDES DE UNION DE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO (JUCD) AND THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S "JUVENTUDES SOCIALISTAS" (JJSS) -- IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATIONS, EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT THE HAVANA FESTIVAL WAS CERTAIN TO BE A PROPAGANDA EXERCISE, AS ITS PREDECESSORS HAD BEEN. SPECHT AND SMITH WENT INTO SOME DETAIL WITH THEIR YOUTH LEADER INTERLOCUTORS ABOUT THE HISTORY AND AIMS OF THE FESTIVAL AND ITS ORGANIZERS.

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2. THE CULTURE MINISTRY OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WE SPOKE (THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS AND HIS DEPUTY) WERE RATHER VAGUE ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE GOVT INTENDED TO GO IN FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING SPANISH PARTICIPATION IN THE FESTIVAL, APPARENTLY REFLECTING INDECISION ON THE GOS'S PART OR SIMPLY THAT A DECISION HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE. THEY SAID THEY HAD PROVIDED THE

SPANISH YOUTH COMMITTEE PREPARING FOR THE FESTIVAL WITH OFFICE SPACE, AT THE COMMITTEE'S REQUEST, AND WOULD ASSIST IT IN ORGANIZING FUND-RAISING EVENTS IN SPAIN. THE GOS MIGHT PAY ROUND TRIP AIR FARE FOR SOME OF THE SPANISH PARTICIPANTS (WHO COULD NUMBER AS MANY AS 250-300), BUT THIS HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED. IN THE CULTURE MINISTRY'S VIEW, THEY SAID, THEY SIMPLY WERE BEING RESPONSIVE TO REQUESTS MADE BY OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED SPANISH YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH WAS, AFTER ALL, THEIR JOB. BUT THEY SEEMED AWARE OF THE NATURE OF THE YOUTH FESTIVAL AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOS SUPPORT FOR SPANISH YOUTH PARTICIPATION.

3. JJSS SEC GEN JUAN ANTONIO BARRAGAN AND OTHER JJSS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXPRESSED GENUINE ENTHUSIASM ABOUT THE FESTIVAL. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THE FESTIVALS HAD IN THE PAST BEEN PROPAGANDA PLATFORMS, THEY TENDED TO THINK THAT THE HAVANA INSTALLMENT WOULD SOMEHOW BE DIFFERENT. SPECHT AND SMITH WERE APPROPRIATELY DIRECT IN ATTEMPTING TO DISABUSE THEM OF THIS IDEA. BARRAGAN SAID THEY HOPED TO PUT TOGETHER A SPANISH DELEGATION NUMBERING BETWEEN 250 AND 300, AND REPRESENTING ALL YOUTH GROUPS RANGING FROM JUCD ON THE RIGHT, THROUGH JJSS AND THE YOUNG COMMUNISTS, TO THE VARIOUS MAOIST AND MARXIST-LENINIST YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOVT WOULD COME THROUGH WITH

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SUFFICIENT FINANCING FOR THE DELEGATION.

4. JUCD LEADER GUSTAVO GILL, IN CONTRAST TO BARRAGAN, WAS QUITE CANDID IN AGREEING WITH SPECHT AND SMITH THAT THE HAVANA FESTIVAL WOULD BE NOTHING MORE THAN A PROPAGANDA SHOW. HE EMPHASIZED THAT JUCD HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE FESTIVAL, BUT WAS PARTICIPATING IN THE PREPARATION COMMITTEE FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS, I.E., TO PREVENT THE COMMITTEE FROM BEING COMPLETELY DOMINATED BY THE LEFT AND FAR-LEFT AND TO GIVE JUCD A MORE "PROGRESSIVE IMAGE. JUCD HAD SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT ACTUALLY ATTENDING THE FESTIVAL, AND HAD NOT YET MADE A DECISION. MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON THE DECISIONS OF OTHER CENTRIST AND CONSERVATIVE EUROPEAN YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS, GILL CONCLUDED.

5. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTTEL, WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR SPANISH PREPARATIONS FOR THE FESTIVAL AND TO REPORT SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS. IN OUR CONTINUING CONTACTS WITH THE CULTURE MINISTRY, JUCD AND JJSS WE ALSO WILL RAISE THE ISSUE AS APPROPRIATE. STABLER

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